

Remarks/Arguments

Claims 1, 3 and 5 have been amended. The specification has been amended.

The Examiner has objected to the disclosure due to certain informalities on page 10, lines 14 and 17 of the specification. Applicant has amended the specification at page 10, as suggested by the Examiner, to correct these informalities and obviate the Examiner's objection.

The Examiner has also objected to claim 3 in that the word "fellows-shaped" on line 22 of the claim should be --bellows-shaped--. Applicant has amended claim 3 to make this change and, therefore, overcome the objection.

The Examiner has rejected applicant's claims 1, 4 and 5 under 35 USC §102 (b) as anticipated by the Tanaka (US 5,365,373) patent. With respect to applicant's claims, as amended, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicant's independent claim 1 has been amended to better define applicant's invention. More particularly, amended claim 1 recites a lens barrel mechanism comprising a first optical unit and a second optical unit. Claim 1 further calls for a bellows-shaped unit for performing light blocking and dust proof, said bellows-shaped unit being disposed between said first optical unit and said second optical unit so as to be expanded and contracted interlocking with relative movement in an optical axial direction between said first optical unit and said second optical unit, wherein said bellows-shaped unit is formed in a shape in conformity with the shape of inside surface of the second optical unit viewed from its front side so as to be movable relative to said second optical unit in the optical axis direction having a clearance therebetween, and one end of said bellows-shaped unit is fixed to said first optical unit, and

wherein the movement of said bellows-shaped unit in the optical axial direction relative to said second optical unit is regulated by different regulating portions of said second optical unit between cases where said bellows-shaped unit is contracted and where said bellows-shaped unit is expanded.

In applicant's lens barrel mechanism of claim 1, the bellows shaped unit (bellows-shaped member 10 and guide member 11) for performing light blocking and dust proof is configured to have a shape of the inner side surface of a second optical unit (lens barrel 1), as shown in FIG. 2 of applicant's drawings (see also the description from line 20, page 10, to line 5, page 11 in applicant's specification). More particularly, as can be seen in FIG. 2, the flange portion 10b of the bellows-shaped unit 10 has three notches and is formed to conform with the inner surface containing the three root portions 7a of the lens barrel 1. Additionally, up-standing portions 11b of the guide member 11 align with the three notches. By this configuration, the relative rotational movement of the lens barrel and the bellow-shaped unit is limited.

As also can be seen in FIG. 2 and discussed in the aforementioned lines and pages of applicant's specification, a certain degree of clearance is set between the lens barrel 1 and the bellows-shaped unit (bellows-shaped member 10 and guide member 11). This allows for relative movement of the lens barrel 1 and the bellows-shaped unit in the optical axis direction.

Such a construction is not taught or suggested by the cited art of record. In particular, in the Tanaka patent, a reinforcing ring 65 provided at the front end of a light intercepting member 61 abuts with a first lens holding frame 11 at the front side of a lens assembly L1 (see, column

5, lines 30-43 of the Tanaka patent). Since the intercepting part 61 abuts against the holding frame 11 at the front side of the lens assembly L1, the Tanaka patent fails to teach or suggest that the front end of the intercepting part 61 be in conformity with the shape of the inside surface of the lens assembly viewed from its front side so as to be movable relative to the assembly in the optical axis direction having a clearance therebetween, as required by applicant's amended claim 1.

Additionally, the Examiner has argued that the barrier actuating ring 16 "is disclosed to be mounted on the lens barrel 12 --col. 4, lines 15-16 -- and therefore is a portion of the second optical unit." However, these lines of the patent merely state that the "actuating ring 16 is rotatable relative to the first lens barrel 12 through a bayonet mount (not shown), and comes into sliding contact with an oblique surface 51d, defined by a recess formed in the linear ring 51, to rotate." Moreover, even if the actuating ring 16 is rotatably mounted to the lens barrel 12, this would not make it a part of the lens assembly L1 and the lens holding frame 11.

Applicant's amended claim 1, and its respective dependent claims, thus patentably distinguish over the Tanaka patent. Applicant's claim 5 has been similarly amended to claim 1 and thus amended claim 5, and its dependent claim, also patentably distinguish over the Tanaka patent.

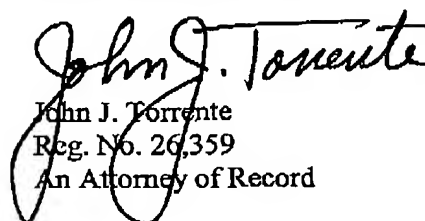
In view of the above, it is submitted that applicant's claims, as amended, patentably distinguish over the cited art of record. Accordingly, reconsideration of the claims is

respectfully requested.

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COWAN, LIEBOWITZ & LATMAN, P.C.
1133 Avenue of the Americas
New York, New York 10036-6799
(212) 790-9200

Respectfully submitted,


John J. Torrente
Reg. No. 26,359
An Attorney of Record